

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

10/660,691

Applicant(s)

KANDA ET AL.

Examiner

Michael P. Mooney

Art Unit

2883

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 8/3/06 Amdt.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-9, 11-19 and 21-24.
3. ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
 5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☒ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date 211/05, 3163104, 911263
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____

The cancellation of claims 10, 20 is acknowledged.

Drawings

The drawings were received on 8/3/06. These drawings are accepted.

REASONS FOR ALLOWANCE

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The prior art, either alone or in combination, does not disclose or render obvious a method comprising shifting the optical fiber guide sections at the both sides upward above the butt alignment section and guiding the optical fibers in the guide grooves of the optical fiber guide sections at the both sides under a condition in that distal ends of the optical fibers protrude at least in length to reach the butt alignment grooves of the butt alignment section; and lowering the optical fiber guide sections at the both sides to areas below the butt alignment section to allow the optical fibers to be received in the opposing butt alignment grooves of the butt alignment section and axially aligning the optical fibers with respect to one another in combination with the rest of claim 1.

It is noted that the claim 1 is allowable because the unique combination of each and every specific element stated in the claim.

The prior art, either alone or in combination, does not disclose or render obvious a fiber axial alignment device comprising optical fiber holder sections, configured to hold at least one pair of the optical fibers, located so as to interpose the butt alignment

Art Unit: 2883

section and the optical fiber guide sections therebetween in combination with the rest of claim 9.

It is noted that the claim 9 is allowable because the unique combination of each and every specific element stated in the claim.

The prior art, either alone or in combination, does not disclose or render obvious a method comprising guiding the optical fibers, under a condition wherein the optical fibers are located above the butt alignment section, so as to allow ends of bared portions, in which sheaths of the optical fibers are removed, of the optical fibers to protrude in the guide grooves of the optical guide sections at least in lengths to permit the ends of the bared portions to reach the butt alignment grooves of the butt alignment section; lowering the optical fiber sections to positions below the butt alignment section to allow bared portions of the optical fibers to be received in the opposing butt alignment grooves of the butt alignment section, respectively, and axially aligning the bared portions with respect to one another; and fusion splicing the opposing optical fibers with respect to one another in combination with the rest of claim 15.

It is noted that the claim 15 is allowable because the unique combination of each and every specific element stated in the claim.

The prior art, either alone or in combination, does not disclose or render obvious a method comprising optical fiber holder sections, configured to hold at least one pair of the optical fibers, located so as to interpose the butt alignment section and the optical fiber guide sections therebetween in combination with the rest of claim 19.

It is noted that the claim 19 is allowable because the unique combination of each and every specific element stated in the claim.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michael P. Mooney whose telephone number is 571-272-2422. The examiner can normally be reached during weekdays, M-F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Frank G. Font can be reached on 571-272-2415. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only.

Art Unit: 2883

For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Michael P. Mooney
Examiner
Art Unit 2883



Frank G. Font
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Art Unit 2883

FGF/mpm
9/22/06